

# Public Service Motivation in State Civil Service

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**Abstract**—The problem of public service motivation remains in Russian state service, and it has an impact on working efficiency and professional level of its staff. This research is aimed at studying the problem of public service motivation of civil servants. Methodological base includes the concept of the bureaucracy by M. Weber, the concept of motivation for public service by D. Perry and L. Wise, as well as the works of leading Russian and foreign scientists in this field. A blanket canvassing of state civil servants was used as a method of collecting source information, while methods of system analysis and general scientific methods were used for its analyzing. Scientists and practitioners give ambiguous assessments of the role of public service motivation in the structure of officials' motivation. Therefore, the aim of this work is to answer the question: does public service motivation have a significant impact on the motivation of officials to perform state civil service. And also, to establish which motivating factors that, according to D. Perry, form the motivation for public service (he mentioned: desire to participate in the development of public policy; commitment to public interest and public debt; self-denial; compassion) are the most important for Russian civil servants? Empirical base of this study included state civil servants of the executive authorities of the Sverdlovsk and Kurgan Regions, in total – more than 250 officials. Analysis of motivational preferences showed that the most part of public servants among the respondents did not consider public service motivation as the leading motivation for their service, and the leading importance in generating public service motivation are such motivating factors as “commitment to public interest and public debt” and “the opportunity to participate in the development of public policy”. Obtained results can be used to improve the institution of staff management in the public civil service.

**Keywords**—state civil service, public service motivation, commitment to public interest.

## I. INTRODUCTION

One of the significant problems for state civil service is to ensure the motivation of officials. Studies performed by foreign and domestic scientists show that the leading motivations of state servants include a special one, i.e. motivation for public service which is due to the internal need for service for the good of the state and society. The peculiarity and usefulness of public service motivation, the ability to manage this motivation in the state service is of interest to researchers and practitioners.

Public service motivation was considered by D. Perry and L. Wise as the altruistic need of an individual to serve the interests of people, the state and society, to perform work which is significant for the state and society, to compromise some needs in the name of public interest. Researchers have established a positive impact of public service motivation on

other motivations, job satisfaction and the desire to maintain it, loyalty to organization, civic interpersonal behavior, labor productivity and organizational performance. Therefore, civil servants with a higher level of public service motivation are more satisfied with their work, more devoted to their organization and have higher labor productivity than those who do have no such motivation [1].

Meanwhile, research results of Russian scientists from different years give different data on the public service motivation of state servants, in addition, there is a tendency to a decrease in this motivation. So, according to the results of large-scale sociological studies by the RANEPA conducted in 2003 - 2017, it was found that the desire to benefit society as a motive for joining the civil service has halved over this period: from 38% in 2003 to 16% in 2017 (38 % in 2003, 31% in 2006, 26% in 2009, 25% in 2012, and 16% in 2017). Researchers also note the prevalence of “selfish” motives of civil servants over “altruistic” ones [2].

The motivation for public service is of theoretical and practical interest in view of the importance of a strategic approach to developing and planning an individual motivational environment for officials, organizing the work of government bodies. How is public service motivation assessed by Russian government officials, how significant is its role in the structure of motivation to serve? To solve this research problem, it is necessary to study the nature of public service motivation, special practice of its application in the Russian public civil service, to assess the influence of the motivating factors of public service established by D. Perry.

## II. RESULTS

### A. Public Service Motivation: Theoretical Aspect

Concept of bureaucracy by Max Weber which is developed in the XIth chapter of his work “Economy and Society”, had the greatest influence on the establishment of the present-day model of government. According to the author, perfect bureaucracy is rational, highly professional, depersonalized and apolitical. A bureaucrat serves the state and society, but not individuals; he should not be a servant of higher officials, and is obliged to work, guided by the interests of the case, regardless of the change of power. All this should be ensured by a number of factors and special procedures aimed at ensuring that civil servants are highly professional experts and identify themselves with the state, and not with specific ideologies, politicians or lobbying groups [3].

On the basis of the Weberian model of public administration in the twentieth century, the managerial model of public administration (New Public Management) was

developed; theoretical foundations of which were laid in the work “Renovating Government” by D. Osborne and T. Gaebler (1992). The authors proposed new principles of public administration: openness, responsiveness, customer focus, transparency, sensitivity and attentiveness to citizens’ problems, focus on justice, efficiency and performance, public accountability, and ethical standards.

New requirements for government policy makers, i.e. officials, included modernization of approaches to motivating their activities. Motivations united by the concept of public service were proposed by D. Perry and L. Wise and are reflected in the concept of “Public service motivation” (PSM) [4]. The authors laid the foundation for a modern understanding of public service motivation (hereinafter referred to as the service motivation, PSM) for state service as a person’s predisposition to respond to the motives of the desire to serve the public good existing mainly or exclusively in government bodies or organizations. This is a special type of motivation which includes selflessly providing assistance to citizens in the interests of state. D. Perry defined three main motivating factors for officials which in various combinations allow forming the necessary incentives in public service: the general level of material compensation, including social guarantees and “non-monetized” benefits; stability and reliability of the workplace, including certain career prospects; motivation for public service [4]. In one study by D. Perry, four motivating factors were found that attract people to public service and form public service motivation: the desire to participate in the development of public policy; commitment to public interest and public debt; self-denial and compassion [5].

Foreign scientists have studied different aspects of public service motivation. Thus, research results revealed that public servants with a higher level of PSM are more satisfied with their work, more devoted to their organization and have higher labor productivity than those who have no such motivation. At the same time, researchers note that the presence of service motivation cannot be the only factor for start working in state service. Thus, material motivation mediates the relationship between the desire to fulfill the need to serve the community and job satisfaction what directly influences the productivity of public servants [1,7].

Studies show that public service motivation is associated with such characteristics of attitude toward work as job satisfaction [8], the desire to keep it [9], and labor productivity. Moreover, productivity grows when employees feel that the results will have a positive impact on society [10]. The positive impact of PSM on organizational commitment was revealed. Moreover, service motivation is most positively associated with organizational commitment when it is accompanied by high internal motivation and ethical leadership [11,12]. PSM also creates the innovative behavior of public servants [13].

Researchers find the origins, deep roots of PSM in raising children in religious families, families with conservative traditions and by parents who served in the military [14]. In general, works of researchers reflects the positive impact of service motivation on all aspects of state service, on the growth of the productivity of public servants what ensures the development of state and increasing welfare of population [15].

Russian scientists also studied different aspects of public service motivation, for example, these related to the assessment of PSM as a factor for activating and updating the conditions of service (organizational) environment, a useful tool to increase the productivity of public service [16]. So, motivation determines working efficiency and, as a result, transparency, responsibility, honesty, service to society and the interests of state, as well as the behavior of a particular public servant [17]. According to T.M. Atnashev [18], the concept of “public service” for Russia has a meaningful connotation –semantic emphasis of this phenomenon shifts toward serving the state, rather than motivation with the possibility of implementing a specific state policy and (or) serving society as a whole, as it is common for Western Europe and USA.

The absence of PSM leads to mismatch between the structure of personal motivation of officials and the requirements of professional activity what results in professional deformation and sharply reduces working efficiency. Thus, employees who have features of the motivation structure that are preferable for their job have on average 20–25% higher labor productivity values than their colleagues without corresponding features in their motivation structure [19]. Generation and level of PSM is influenced by growing importance of personality-oriented factors in society and decreasing importance of factors oriented to public interests. Decreasing importance of public service motivation reduces the motivation for starting work in state service [20].

#### *B. Public Service Motivation: Research Method and Results*

In 2018, we conducted research on public service motivation in the state civil service at the level of authorities of the subjects of the Russian Federation. Empirical base of this study included civil servants of two executive bodies of the Sverdlovsk Region (152 respondents), 85.5% women, 90% aged 30 to 60 years, and two executive bodies of the Kurgan Region (98 respondents), 72.4% women, 92.8% aged 30 to 60 years. This survey was conducted as a blanket canvassing using questionnaires. The aim of this study was to assess the impact of public service motivation on the motivation of officials to perform state civil service, as well as to determine the significance for officials of motivating factors (established by D. Perry) that form public service motivation. The questionnaire developed by the authors contained questions aimed at respondents’ assessment of the place of public service motivation in the hierarchy of officials’ motivations. Summarizing the answers of state civil servants to one of the questions on the questionnaire (“Which of the following motives for state service are the most significant for you?”), eight groups of motivations were defined: - stability of position; - opportunity to serve the state and society; - the possibility of career growth, career; - social guarantees; - gaining professional experience; - managerial nature of labor; - status, prestige of work; - financial situation; these were ranked by respondents on a five-point rating scale where five points is the highest rating. According to obtained answers to the questionnaire by state civil servants of the Sverdlovsk Region, it was established that the ability to serve the state and society is the main motivation for service in 33% of respondents.

To clarify the depth of public service motivation level, respondents were asked to evaluate their own level of this

motivation on a five-point rating scale (five points is the highest rating). These results are shown in Table I.

**TABLE I. LEVEL OF PUBLIC SERVICE MOTIVATION IN THE STATE CIVIL SERVICE (SVERDLOVSK REGION)**

Points/level	Number of respondents	(%)
5 – high level	51	33.5
4 – fairly high level	39	25.6
3 – average (satisfactory) level	19	12.5
2 – low level	8	5.4
1 – very low level	35	23.0

Source: calculated by the author

Data shown in the table reveal that PSM is estimated as a high level motivation by more than a third of respondents; almost 59% – as motivation with high and fairly high level. For more than 28% of respondents, service motivation is low and has no incentive value.

According to the results of a survey of state civil servants in the Kurgan Region, it was found that the ability to serve the state and society is the main motivation for service in 17% of the respondents. To clarify the depth of public service motivation level, respondents were asked to evaluate their own level of this motivation on a five-point rating scale (five points is the highest rating). These results are shown in Table II.

**TABLE II. LEVEL OF PUBLIC SERVICE MOTIVATION IN THE STATE CIVIL SERVICE (KURGAN REGION)**

Points/level	Number of respondents	(%)
5 – high level	17	17.3
4 – fairly high level	23	23.4
3 – average (satisfactory) level	18	18.3
2 – low level	19	19.3
1 – very low level	21	21.4

Source: calculated by the author

According to the data in the table, more than 17% of respondents rate PSM as a high-level motivation, more than 40% of respondents – as a motivation of high and fairly high level. The same number of respondents rates service motivation as having no incentive value.

Results of this study showed that there is a significant gap – more than twice – in the level of service motivation for officials between two regions. Sverdlovsk and Kurgan Regions geographically are neighbors, but are at different levels of socio-economic development. Analysis of this fact does not apply to the subject of this article; however, it requires further attention of researchers.

In order to study the generation of public service motivation, four motivating factors specified by D. Perry were used that form public service motivation: the opportunity to participate in the development of public policy; commitment to public interest and public debt; self-denial and compassion. What is the role of each of them in the creation of PSM? To solve this problem, the questionnaire for public servants of the Sverdlovsk Region included the question: “What attracts you in the opportunity to serve the state and society: the opportunity to participate in the development of public policy; commitment to public interest and public debt; self-denial; compassion?” To determine the depth of the level of motivating factors, respondents were asked to rank each factor on a five-point rating scale (five points is the highest score). Results of this assessment by respondents are shown in Tables III-VI.

**TABLE III. INFLUENCE OF “OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC POLICY” MOTIVATING FACTOR ON PSM**

Points/level	Number of respondents	(%)
5 – high level	47	31.0
4 – fairly high level	30	19.7
3 – average (satisfactory) level	32	21.0
2 – low level	9	6.0
1 – very low level	34	22.3

Source: calculated by the author

Data shown in Table III reveal that “the opportunity to participate in the development of public policy” is estimated as a high-level motivation by 31% of respondents; more than 50% of respondents rate “the opportunity to participate in the development of public policy” as a high and fairly high level of motivation. For more than 28% of respondents, this motivation is low, and has no incentive value.

**TABLE IV. INFLUENCE OF “COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC INTERESTS AND PUBLIC DEBT” MOTIVATING FACTOR ON PSM**

Points/level	Number of respondents	(%)
5 – high level	58	38.2
4 – fairly high level	30	19.7
3 – average (satisfactory) level	28	18.5
2 – low level	6	3.9
1 – very low level	30	19.7

Source: calculated by the author

According to the data in Table 4, 38% of respondents rate “commitment to public interest and public debt” as a high level motivation; almost 58% of respondents rate “commitment to public interest and public debt” as a high and fairly high level of motivation. For more than 23% of respondents, this motivation is low and has no incentive value.

**TABLE V. INFLUENCE OF “SELF-DENIAL” MOTIVATING FACTOR ON PSM**

Points/level	Number of respondents	(%)
5 – high level	9	5.9
4 – fairly high level	19	12.5
3 – average (satisfactory) level	35	23.0
2 – low level	22	14.5
1 – very low level	67	44.1

Source: calculated by the author

Ranking data shown in Table 5 reveal that more than 5% of respondents rate “self-denial” as a high-level motivation; more than 18% of respondents rate “self-denial” as a high and fairly high level of motivation. For more than 58% of respondents, this motivation is low and has no incentive value.

**TABLE VI. INFLUENCE OF “COMPASSION” MOTIVATING FACTOR ON PSM**

Points/level	Number of respondents	(%)
5 – high level	18	11.9
4 – fairly high level	20	13.1
3 – average (satisfactory) level	35	23.0
2 – low level	18	11.9
1 – very low level	61	40.1

Source: calculated by the author

According to the ranking results shown in Table 6, more than 11% of respondents rate “compassion” as a high level motivation; 25% of respondents rate compassion as a high and reasonably high level motivation. For 52% of respondents, this motivation is low and has no incentive value.

So, these studies show that motivating factors “commitment to public interest and public debt” – 38% and “the opportunity to participate in the development of public policy” – 31% are of the greatest importance in the creation of PSM. Motivating factors “compassion” – 11% and “self-denial” – 5% are low and do not have a decisive influence on the formation of service motivation.

### III. DISCUSSION

As a result of the study, we found that the ability to serve the state and society is the main motivation for service for no more than a third of respondents which are state civil servants (33% from the Sverdlovsk Region and 17% from the Kurgan Region). Officials rate PSM motivating factors as high: “commitment to public interest and public debt” – 38% of respondents, “opportunity to participate in public policy development” – 31%, “compassion” - 11% and “self-denial” - 5%.

Obtained results are correlated with the data of previous studies, for example, studies of the motivation of state civil servants conducted in 2012 by K. Magomedov. Thus, the author notes that 24.7% of respondents from among state civil servants have the motivation of “desire to benefit society and the state” [21]. According to the results of the studies of motivation for state civil and municipal employees conducted in 2016 by N.L. Ivanova and D.A. Podolsky, it was found that the motivation for the desire to benefit society when starting the service was noted as the dominant one by 28.3% of respondents [22].

Thus, the results of studies during the recent 5-7 years show a low PSM level in officials, up to one third of the number of respondents, what correlates with the results of our study. We are not aware of studies of the influence of four motivating factors that, according to D. Perry’s method, form public service motivation in relation to Russian officials. Given the relatively small sample for this empirical study, it seems reasonable to conduct larger-scale studies of the influence of these factors.

### IV. CONCLUSION

Results of the study of public service motivation of state civil servants in the Sverdlovsk and Kurgan Regions show the presence of PSM as the main motivation for state service in one third of respondents; service motivation is formed mainly by motivating factors “commitment to public interest and public debt” and “the opportunity to participate in the development of public policy”; motivation for “compassion” and “self-denial” are low and do not have a decisive influence on developing service motivation.

Obtained results make it possible to answer our research question: “Does public service motivation have a significant impact on the motivation of officials to perform state civil service and which factors that according to D. Perry form to state service motivation are most important for civil servants?” in the following way. Most Russian officials are not motivated by public service. The most important for the formation of PSM in civil servants are motivating factors “commitment to public interest and public debt” and “the opportunity to participate in the development of public policy”.

To improve the situation, in our opinion, it is necessary to select and place staff of state civil service taking into account the presence of relevant value orientations. In state service,

public service motivation should be developed as a positive value attitude of officials, and service (organizational) environment should be oriented towards serving the state and the society.

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